

World Summer Camp

My favourite activity is choosing my favourites!



Complexity



8-13 years



45 - 60 minutes



4-30



Discrimination



Poverty



Human Rights

Type of activity

Prioritising, negotiation, discussion

Overview

Children select people to share a tent with from a list of people with brief descriptions, and then discuss the assumptions on which they based their choices.

Objectives

- To examine personal stereotypes and prejudices and consider their origin
- To promote equality and non-discrimination

Preparation

- Create a list of 12 campers from the list, or create new ones suitable for your group. At least one should be from a non-existent place.
- Make copies of the activity sheet for each child, including the description of the camp, the assignment, and the 12 campers.
- Alternative: write the list on a flipchart or board.

Materials

- A copy of the activity sheet and a pencil for each child
- Paper and markers for each group

Instructions

1. Tell the children:

You and children from all over the world have just arrived at World Summer Camp. Nobody knows anyone else. The leaders have decided that you can choose who you will share a tent with for the next two weeks. Each tent sleeps four children. You can choose three other campers to share the tent with you.

2. Give each child a copy of the activity sheet and a pencil. Make sure that everyone understands the instructions. If it is helpful, read aloud the descriptions of the different campers.
3. Ask the children to work individually to select the three other campers that they would like to share a tent with. No-one should talk during this stage.
4. When everyone has finished making their selection, divide the children into groups of four. You can also have groups of three or five to accommodate the total size of your group. Explain the task:

- There are four tents in your section of the camp. Each tent holds four people, so there should be 16 people in all, including yourselves and others from the list. With your group, you need to decide which campers will share each tent. You need to draw four tents on your piece of paper and write on each tent the names of the children who will sleep there. Then stick your paper on the board.
- Note that if your group is five people and you all chose different people, you will have more than

16 people in total, so you will need to decide who to eliminate from the people you selected earlier. If your group is only three people, or if more than one of you chose the same person from the list, you will need to add more campers to make a total of 16 people.

5. Give the children time to look at the tent diagrams of other groups. Then read out the list of campers in order and find out which tent each person has been assigned to by the different groups. This will allow the children to see who else has chosen the same campers.

Debriefing and Evaluation

1. Discuss the activity using questions such as these:
 - Did you enjoy the activity? Was it difficult to select three children to share your tent? Why, or why not?
 - Were some children chosen more than once to share a tent? Why?
 - Were some children not chosen at all? Why?
 - Was it difficult to agree within your group?
 - Did you learn anything about yourself, or about anyone else?
2. Compare this activity with situations in real life:
 - Was this situation realistic?
 - Can you think of other situations where you have to choose between different people?
 - How does it feel to choose one person over another?
 - How does it feel – in real life – to be chosen? How does it feel not to be chosen?
 - What kinds of similar choices do you make in real life?
 - Do all children have the right to choose? To be chosen?
3. Discuss how we form ideas about others, even those we have never met:
 - How do you form ideas about people you have never met?
 - Do other people have stereotypes about you? How do you think they formed them?
 - What are the consequences of stereotypes?
 - If discrimination is one consequence of stereotypes, how do people get from stereotypes to discrimination?
 - The CRC states that no children can be discriminated against because of their 'race', colour, sex, language, religion, opinion, origin, social or economic status, disability, birth, or any other quality of the children's parents or guardians. Would you say that, however, discrimination does happen in reality? If yes, what can we do to stop the discrimination of children in our community?

Suggestions for follow-up

The activity 'Dear Diary' contrasts different people's perceptions of the same day. The activities 'Blind-folded' and 'Picture Games' deal with stereotypes of different kinds.

Ideas for action

The next time the group has to choose partners or teams, take the opportunity to remind the children of this exercise and what they learned about making selections.

Tips for the facilitator

Be careful not to reinforce stereotypes in any way. That would defeat the purpose of this activity!

The ideal number of children for the small groups is four, with each child making a list of three campers. However, the activity can work for small groups of any size: they will just need to negotiate and add or eliminate campers to make 16 children in all.

Choose and/or adapt the list of campers carefully to shape the activity towards your desired learning outcomes. Be careful to ensure that no child in your group will identify with any of the campers.

If a summer camp or sharing a tent is not relevant for your children, choose another setting that involves close proximity (e.g. a shared school desk, a youth hostel or dormitory room).

Avoid answering questions about the list of campers. Explain that the children should decide on the basis of the list alone.

Some children may be unable to choose and say they don't care who they share the tent with. In that case, ask them who they do not wish to share the tent with. The results can still be compared among the children in the small group.

Some members of the group may decide to share a tent with each other and put the "foreign campers" in other tents. Do not intervene, as the results will be very revealing. Similarly, do not give the children the impression that it is bad to want to choose people like themselves. Not all choices relate to discrimination, and it is very common to feel safe with, and choose people who seem to be the same as we are.

Adaptations

To shorten the activity: use smaller tents, so that each child must choose only one or two other campers. Reduce the total number of campers to choose from. Leave out the small group work in Step 3.

To facilitate small group decision-making, make a list of all the campers chosen by members of the group. Then each child in turn chooses one camper until all the campers have been divided.

Provide edited lists for different groups: for example, remove references to gender for one group but not for another; or remove references to country / nationality for one group but not another.

For younger children: use the suggestions above to shorten the activity. Adapt the descriptions of campers to match the experience of the younger children (e.g. a T-shirt with a skull on it may have no connotations for them).



Handout

Activity sheet

World summer camp

You and children from all over the world have just arrived at World Summer Camp. Nobody knows anyone else. The leaders have decided that you can choose who you will share a tent with for the next two weeks. Each tent sleeps four children. You can choose three other campers to share the tent with you.

World camp campers

Choose 3 children from this list that you would like to share the tent with!

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

1. A child with a broken leg and crutches
2. A Roma child from your own country
3. A child from Australia with red hair and lots of freckles
4. A Japanese child with hair dyed bright pink
5. An overweight child from the USA wearing dental braces
6. A shy child from Finland
7. An immigrant child from Zimbabwe
8. A blind child accompanied by a guide dog
9. A child with thick glasses and a spotty face
10. A child from the UK dressed in a school uniform
11. A child from Germany with a black eye, and wearing a T-shirt with a skull on it
12. A child from Peru dressed in traditional clothes
13. A deaf child who uses sign language to communicate
14. A child from Mongolia with very long black hair
15. A child from your school who is often bullied
16. A child from Palestine with only one arm
17. A child with blond hair who speaks all the time
18. A child who seems permanently to have hiccups
19. A child dressed in a jacket just like yours
20. A child who is always playing with their mobile phone
21. A child of parents from China with a guitar
22. A Jewish child who is afraid of the dark.